

Appl. No. 10/569,560
Amdt. dated July 2, 2008
Reply to Office Action of 4 June 2008

REMARKS

This Amendment and Response is filed responsive to the Office Action dated 4 June 2008. In the Office Action, Claims 1, 2, and 4-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over various references. The references used to support the obviousness rejection included several that were previously cited and one new reference that was cited to support the new grounds of rejection following the Request for Continued Examination. Specifically, the Office Action cited U.S. Patent No. 7,044,434 (Brinks et al.), which has a filing date of 9 March 2004. Applicant notes that the present application claims priority benefit to a provisional application filed on 15 September 2003. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims of the present application are entitled to the priority date of 15 September 2003, which pre-dates the filing date of the cited Brinks reference. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Brinks is not prior art as asserted in the Office Action. As Brinks was required to provide support for the obviousness rejection (i.e., to show all of the features of the claimed invention in the prior art), Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of Claims 1, 2, and 4-10 are moot without the support of Brinks.

In this Response, Applicant has addressed each and all of the issues raised in the Office Action. Applicant respectfully submits that each of the rejections has been rendered moot. Accordingly, Applicant believes that this application is in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowance covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Appl. No. 10/569,560
Amdt. dated July 2, 2008
Reply to Office Action of 4 June 2008

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas W. McArthur
Reg. No. 50,795
Attorney for Applicants

Date: July 2, 2008

ExxonMobil Upstream Research Company
P.O. Box 2189
CORP-URC-SW359
Houston, Texas 77252-2189
Telephone: 731-431-4657